

Ambassador's Remarks
Launch of the DARE program in Bahrain
Police Officers Club, Gudaibiya
January 13, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

Your Excellency Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla al Khalifa, Minister of the Interior;
Your Excellency Dr. Majid bin Ali al Noaimi, Minister of Education; and Shaikh
Abdulla bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Southern Governor. I am proud and honored to join you
for this important ceremony today in which we launch the DARE program in Bahrain.

This is a very special occasion for me for another reason as well. After 31/2 years
as U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, this is my last official act as
Ambassador. I depart tomorrow on a one-way ticket back to Washington D.C. I cannot
think of a more fitting or memorable event to end this wonderful journey than to be with
you here today to recognize the hard work of those who have made this program
possible and to draw attention to the important role that youth play in the development
of our beloved Bahrain.

DARE was founded in 1983 by a police officer in Los Angeles, a city in the
United States that has repeatedly struggled to combat drugs and violent crime. In its
almost 30 year history, the DARE program has grown significantly. About 75 percent
of school districts in the United States have implemented DARE educational programs.
Whether in a small town or a large city, youth in every society wrestle with their own
set of unique challenges. These could include alcohol or drug abuse, bullying, peer
pressure, internet safety, or others. This is why DARE is so important and why I am so
delighted that the program is being implemented in Bahrain: DARE strengthens
communities by educating youth, teaching them to resist negative influences, and

encouraging them to lead safe and healthy lives and make positive life choices.

I would like to recognize the Southern Governor, Sheikh Abdullah bin Rashid al Khalifa, for having the vision to see how a partnership between the DARE Program and the Southern Governorate could benefit the young of Bahrain and the commitment and the resourcefulness to translate a great idea into a real program on the ground. That's not easy. It requires intelligence as well as muscle, and the Governor has plenty of both. I also think it's important to commend His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa al Khalifa for having the wisdom to entrust someone of Sheikh Abdullah's generation to a position of high authority and responsibility. Today's ceremony and the success it represents proves the benefits of placing young people with fresh ideas and energy in senior government positions, and I hope we see more of it in the years to come.

Because the ultimate beneficiaries of this program and the work of all of you here today are the young people of Bahrain. They will learn things about tolerance and dialogue and partnership that they would not have been able to experience without this program. And that's good for them, for Bahrain and for the United States.

The other aspect of the DARE program that makes it so effective is that it will build linkages between classrooms throughout Bahrain. DARE is not simply a program for combating drugs, alcohol, and violence. In reality, it is a program that promotes civic engagement and involves young people in an ongoing dialogue on how to improve their societies. Through the DARE program, police officers talk directly to students about the challenges they face and encourage them to be partners in protecting their communities. These are lessons that are taught not only by parents and friends. Neighbors, teachers, and other mentors play an important role as well. It takes

community leaders such as police officers to demonstrate that by being responsible and making positive choices, students can build a strong foundation for future success.

Many of you here today will serve as mentors in the DARE program in Bahrain. I commend you for your commitment to helping teach Bahrain's young people. You are providing a valuable and important service to your country and we thank you.

And finally, thank you Your Excellency Sheikh Rashid, Your Excellency Dr. Majid, Your Excellency Sheikh Abdullah and all our Bahraini friends here today for letting us at the U.S. Embassy be a part of this program. You honor us with your trust and confidence and partnership. It is a trust that we treasure and will constantly strive to do right by. God bless you all.